

NOAA Fisheries Service

National Marine Fisheries Service
Pacific Islands Region



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FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR SMALL BOAT FISHING TO PROTECT SEA TURTLES

On December 15, 2005, NOAA Fisheries Service implemented federal regulations intended to increase the survival of sea turtles that are accidentally caught by pelagic fishermen. The regulations affect trollers, handliners, and other fishermen who fish in federal waters from 3-200 nautical miles offshore.

Any fisherman who uses hooks to target pelagic fishes (tunas, marlins, wahoo, mahimahi, and other open ocean fish) in federal waters and who catches or entangles a sea turtle must now follow certain procedures for handling, resuscitating, and releasing the turtle.

Pelagic longline fishermen have been required to follow similar procedures for several years. The recently-issued regulations extend the handling, resuscitation and release requirements to most non-longline fishermen for the first time. If a small boat fisherman accidentally hooks or entangles a turtle while fishing, the turtle must be handled to minimize further injury and to promote its survival.

The new regulations became effective December 15, 2005, and will remain in effect until they are revised or removed by NOAA.. The full compliance guide, containing details about the handling, resuscitation and release requirements, is available by request from NOAA Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814, or on their website at <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/pir>.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries Service, visit: www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

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